NOTE XXIV.

ON A NEW SPECIES OF CUCKOO FROM MADAGASCAR.

BY

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Cuculus Audeberti.

The typical specimen of this new species, was obtained by Mr. Audebert, on the tenth of June 1878, in the neighborhood of Ambodikilo near Mananare a place on the South-Western shore of the bay of Antongil. Our traveller states that this was the only example of the species which he met with during a course of two years in the North-Eastern parts of Madagascar, a fact leading to the conclusion that this species is much less generally distributed in the country mentioned than its congener, the Cuculus himalayanus or Rochii.

The next allied species of Cuculus Audeberti is the Indian Cuculus sparveroides, Vigors, from the continent of India, put by modern ornithologists, after the example of S. Müller in the subgenus Hierococcyx.

The two species show indeed a strong resemblance to each other in size, in general appearance and in the dimensions of their different parts. The Madagascar bird is, however, quite distinct by very striking modifications in the distribution of colors of the plumage.

These modifications may be thus stated: —

The whole underpart of the Madagascar species is of an uniform pure white, without the least trace of longitudinal streaks on the chest, or transverse bands on the breast, flanks, and belly; nor is the chest by no means washed with rufous. The feathers of the shanks equally white and only marked, instead of by numerous regular bands ,by a few dark transverse spots. The under tail-coverts, one inch longer than in Cuculus sparveroides, show, on the contrary, each, several large and complete transverse black bands, whereas in the Indian species this marking occurs only accidentally and is, moreover, reduced to a few obsolete and imperfect transverse spots The under coverts of the wing are pure white, and not of a rufous colour, transversed with brownish black bands. The black bands, so conspicuous on the inner webs of the quills in the Indian bird are entirely wanting in the species of Madagascar. The dark colour of the upper parts is, in our new bird, more dusky, without any reddish hue or ashy tinge. The tail-feathers show the usual terminal large black band, but it is bordered, at the end, with white, and followed by a white spot, but the other bands, four or five in number, which render the tail-feathers of the Indian species so conspicuous, do not exist in our new bird. Last of all, it must be observed, that the bird has the extremities of both series of quills, and of the great wing-coverts margined with pure white, and that the bill is stronger and much larger at its base, and that the nostrils have not a sort of tubular aspect but that of a simple oblique split.

Mr. Audebert, to whom this species is dedicated, found the iris of the eye of an uniform black color.

Measures of the principal parts of the female specimen, type of the species. Total length fourteen inches (French measure). Wing eight inches and nine lines. Tail eight inches. Undercoverts of the tail five inches and four lines. Tarse eleven lines. Middle toe without nail eleven lines. Bill from front eleven lines.